

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Adrien Block

Middle School 025

**34-65 192 Street
Queens
NY 11358**

Principal: Mary Ellen Kociszewski

Dates of review: February 1 - 2, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Diane Kay

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Adrien Block is a middle school with 889 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 21% Hispanic, 30% White, and 47% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Adrien Block is a place where the community really matters. The new principal spent much of her time in the early months of this year forging solid relationships and sharing a new vision for the school's future development. While the school continues its historically successful focus on high student achievement, including above average grade 8 science and math Regents pass rates, it is also turning its attention to better supporting the school's lower achieving students and their families. The school responded to parental requests for better communication with new structures, such as translated written communications for non-English speaking families, an automated phone system, and ongoing ARIS Parent Link workshops. Teachers and staff effectively work together to provide students with a safe, nurturing environment which students and their families recognize and appreciate. All stakeholders see themselves as active supporters of the school's mission and willingly work together to attain their goals.

Consistent and improved collection and use of data is a high priority for the school. The principal and assistant principals effectively organize school, grade, subject and class data on spreadsheets and graphs to create an overview of the school's strengths and needs. The school has trained all teachers in the use of ARIS and Periodic Assessment data to inform differentiated instruction. Additionally, there has been a school wide campaign to understand students' learning styles and interests as entry points for engaging instruction. However, data analysis by teacher teams does not yet consistently translate into fine-tuned goal setting and improved instruction for the school's most challenged learners. Additionally, there is still work to be done to adequately monitor progress towards benchmarks and interim goals, so that the school can achieve interventions and midstream instructional changes in a timely manner.

The school is making a very good effort to align its professional development plan with school goals. Supervisors frequently observe teachers who state that they receive helpful feedback to support their efforts at differentiating instruction. The staff is highly collegial, and team meetings have priority status in the school plan. These efforts have resulted in a widespread, emerging understanding of the inquiry process. School leaders are presently developing a structure to monitor and support this work in order to deepen its impact on instruction and student outcomes and build the staff's leadership capacity.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Relationships among staff and students are very supportive and result in an orderly and secure environment that promotes the social, emotional and academic growth of students.
 - Students and their parents state that this is a very safe school with very clear expectations for behavior. They identify their caring homeroom teachers, deans, assistant principals and guidance counselors as their “go to” supports. Additionally, an effective partnership with Child Center offers after school academic and counseling services that help students reach their scholastic potential.
 - Students credit their strong student government general organization with giving them a voice in decisions, such as extracurricular activities and school spirit events. They openly state that theirs is a school that fully involves them and provides them with an optimal learning environment and the support they need to succeed.
- The school community has a clear vision of its future development, which has led to a unified commitment to shared goals.
 - School leadership team members work collaboratively throughout the year to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan. They speak openly about the deliberate actions the school is taking to achieve its short- and long-term goals. Most visible to all stakeholders is the increased focus on the use of technology as a tool to support learning. Teachers are receiving training in the use of SMARTboards, students are learning to share information via power point presentations, and parents are logging onto ARIS Parent Link to access their children’s exam results. As a result, the school community is developing a growing understanding of technology’s strong potential to engage and support learning.
- The new principal makes purposeful organizational decisions that support school goals and initiatives.
 - Based on feedback from the Learning Environment Survey, a student interest survey and the school’s long-range goals, the principal has revised the school program to achieve full and active use of the technology center. As a result, students and staff have greater access to Periodic Assessment supports to hone internet research and presentation skills.
 - The school has prioritized teacher collaboration by implementing a school-based option that allows staff to use one of their 37½-minute daily extensions for teacher team meetings. Consequently, teachers have increased time to develop data analysis and inquiry skills.
- The school uses effective structures and tools to collect and analyze data that inform school wide organizational and instructional decisions.

- School leaders consistently run a variety of ARIS reports to disaggregate summative assessment data that informs class placement and academic interventions. They follow up with thorough analyses of Periodic Assessment and common quarterly and mid-year exam results to determine if there are any trends across subjects, grades, and classes. Similarly, school leaders share monthly reports of attendance and lateness with guidance counselors so they can provide additional support to students demonstrating negative attendance patterns.
- All members of the school community communicate and share high expectations so that all stakeholders take ownership of student achievement.
 - Parents view themselves as partners in their children’s education and are proud of their active role in school decisions. They feel that their input regarding the need for better home-school communication resulted in the school’s new automated phone system. The community values and celebrates students’ best efforts at monthly parent association meetings where honor roll, student-of-the month, and citizenship awards are distributed. The school also conveys high expectations through creative tools, like its newly improved progress reports that update student performance between report cards and provide families with helpful comments that highlight students’ strengths and needs.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice that have led to improved instruction.
 - Teachers describe the feedback they receive as “constant”. New teachers feel especially supported by their mentors who work with them on a regular, weekly basis. They cite the consistent use of data to drive instruction as a major area of focus for classroom observations this year. Teachers work with their assistant principals, coaches and peers to improve the cohesiveness of their instruction. This has led to greater consistency and the implementation of school wide initiatives, like teacher assessment notebooks and the posting of lesson agendas.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater coherence and consistency in the collection and use of classroom data in order to improve strategic instructional decisions.
 - The use of teacher assessment notebooks and student work folders documents a growing trend among teachers to make sense of summative and Periodic Assessments and use it to evaluate and drive instructional decisions. However, the school has not yet fully embedded these practices to systematically collate and track data to inform areas of mastery and the next steps for learning and instruction.
 - The school has yet to define “bottom line” practices for collecting and using day-to-day classroom data. Consequently, teachers’ ability to fully integrate ongoing formative data into their regular practice varies. This limits the school’s ability to address the special needs of its sub groups, particularly English language learners.

- Develop benchmarks that enable school leaders and staff to measure progress towards all interim and long-term goals so they can make adjustments in a timely manner.
 - School leaders track interim progress towards June goals through analysis of Periodic Assessments and common mid-term exams. However, these assessments are not yet linked, and systems to monitor progress at more strategic levels are not yet fully developed or congruent. This inhibits the school's ongoing ability to adjust its goals and plans.
 - While teachers display rubrics in classrooms, there is little evidence that they are consistently used to measure progress towards interim goals. Therefore, their potential to have a positive impact on targeted instruction is not yet fully realized across the school.
- Expand the culture of collaborative inquiry so that identified leaders support teacher teams in using student outcomes to reflect on problems of practice and set long and short term goals for targeted populations.
 - Interdisciplinary teacher teams meet regularly and use student data as a springboard for discussion. However, they describe themselves as "fledglings" as they have not yet fully developed structures for examining student and teacher work together. As a result, conversations tend to stray from team to individual goals. Since they are not yet adept at choosing target populations or creating benchmarks to monitor progress, there is limited opportunity to adjust instructional strategies in response to student outcomes.
 - School leaders are developing a structure to assess and support inquiry work. Teams are currently self-evaluative and do not yet identify teacher leaders or other facilitators to structure and support their work. Consequently, the school's ability to build capacity through inquiry work is limited.
- Deepen differentiated instruction to challenge all students, including the school's lowest achievers and English language learners, in order to accelerate their learning.
 - The school homogeneously groups its highest achievers in order to provide them with an advanced and challenging curriculum that includes Regents credit in grade 8 math and science. Additionally, teachers provide small group and one-to-one assistance to students in need of extra support. They offer choices of assignments to allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding of learning goals. However, the classrooms and work folders of low achievers and English language learners do not yet show consistent evidence of tiered support that ensures their progress and success. For example, teachers rely on student translators to assist English language learners in the classroom, but the tasks often remain too challenging and students do not fully engage. As a result, instruction does not strategically address the special needs of these students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Adrien Block	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed